



YOUNG SOUTHEAST ASIAN LEADERS INITIATIVE

WINTER 2015 YSEALI INSTITUTE ON RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

Host Institution – Temple University in Philadelphia, PA
January 10 – February 14, 2015

Deadline for Applications: October 17, 2014

Institute Objectives

In 2013, President Obama launched the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI) to enhance the United States' relations with future leaders of Southeast Asia and foster an ASEAN community. YSEALI offers education on regional issues, professional skills-building, and opportunities to put those skills into action through educational exchanges to the United States, professional development workshops in the region, online networking, and project seed money. YSEALI activities focus on four themes: economic development, environmental protection, education and civic engagement.

As part of YSEALI, the Study of the U.S. Branch will sponsor the YSEALI Institute for Student Leaders on Religious Pluralism in the United States in support of the civic engagement theme. This third YSEALI Institute complements two previous YSEALI Institutes on the topic of Environmental Issues.

Program Description

Utilizing the Study of the U.S. Institutes (SUSI) for Student Leaders model, the YSEALI Institute is an intensive academic program whose purpose is to provide groups of undergraduate student leaders with a deeper understanding of the United States, while simultaneously enhancing their leadership skills. The Institute on Religious Pluralism in the United States will consist of a balanced series of seminar discussions, readings, group presentations, and lectures. Educational travels, local site visits, and volunteer opportunities will complement the coursework and classroom activities. The Institute will include an academic residency component of approximately four weeks and a domestic travel component of approximately one week that will include a 2-3 day closing program in Washington, D.C.

The YSEALI Institute on Religious Pluralism in the United States will explore U.S. history, society, and institutions within the context of religious pluralism and interfaith dialogue. Topics will include, but are not limited to, early religious traditions in the U.S.; the separation of church and state; immigration and the introduction of new religions in the United States; protection and representation of minority groups and religions; and interfaith dialogue. Participants will meet with U.S. community leaders of different faiths that advocate for collaboration and tolerance among religious groups and will also examine the leadership role that religious officials play in their own societies and develop ideas for how they can work with leaders, of similar or different faiths, to bring about positive social change. During their four-day study tour, participants will travel to Florida where they will have the opportunity to visit historic and cultural sites and discuss topics related to immigration and the Native-American experience.

Program Funding

Through an award to Temple University, the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) will cover all participant costs, including: program administration; international and domestic travel; ground transportation; book, cultural, mailing and incidental allowances; and housing and subsistence.

Participants should plan on bringing their own spending money if they wish to purchase souvenirs or other items during their time in the United States.

Housing and meal arrangements

Students will be asked to share rooms with another participant of the same gender in a full-service hotel in Philadelphia. Per-diem will be provided for participants to purchase meals at the hotel, at campus eateries, and at cafes and restaurants surrounding the campus. Some meals will also be arranged by the program.

Care will be taken to ensure that any special requirements regarding diet, daily worship, housing, and medical care are satisfied.

Health Benefits

All participants will receive the Department of State's Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE) for the duration of the program with coverage up to \$100,000 with a \$25 co-pay. Pre-existing conditions are not covered.

Program requirements and restrictions

Participants are expected to participate fully in the academic program. They should attend all lectures and organized activities, and complete assigned readings. Candidates should be made aware that the Institute is very intensive and that there will be little time for personal pursuits unrelated to the program.

Candidates will NOT be allowed to arrive in the U.S. prior to the start date of the Institute or remain in the U.S. after its end date. Similarly, participants will not be allowed to leave the Institute to visit relatives or friends while in the U.S. If a relative or friend wishes to visit them, it will be addressed on a case by case basis, in consultation with ECA and the program director.

Violations of program rules, host institution rules, or local, state or federal laws can be grounds for immediate dismissal from the program. It is important that these requirements and restrictions be made clear to all candidates before nominations are submitted.

English Language Ability

All candidates should be proficient in English so that they can be active participants in the academic program; they will need to fully understand lectures, actively participate in discussions, and read and write assignments in English. Host institutions will take into account that the level of comprehension and speaking ability of students may vary, and will prepare lectures and discussions that meet the highest academic standards while using language appropriate for students where English is their second or third language. All participants must be fully proficient in English; throughout the Institute

Candidate description and qualifications

The participants are expected to be highly motivated and exemplary undergraduate students from colleges, universities, and other institutions of higher education. While all candidates should have a strong interest in religious pluralism, their fields of study might vary, and can include disciplines such as Anthropology, Government, History, International Affairs, Law, Political Science, Religion, Sociology, etc. Candidates should have little or no prior experience in the United States or with U.S. government institutions in their home country.

In order to facilitate meaningful conversations on religious pluralism, we encourage applications from any religious and ethnic communities, as well as the minority communities.

The idea candidate for this program should

- have a strong interest in religious pluralism; represent diverse ethnic and religious groups;
- be fluent in English;
- be between 18 and 25 years of age;
- be willing to share their U.S. experience with peers, community groups, and other relevant organizations upon their return home, as local circumstances allow;
- be willing to join the broader YSEALI network;
- have at least one semester remaining in their university studies and be committed to returning home to complete their degree;
- demonstrate strong leadership qualities;
- indicate a serious interest in learning about the United States;
- have a sustained high level of academic achievement, as indicated by grades, awards, and teacher recommendations;
- have demonstrated commitment to community and extracurricular university activities;
- have had little or no prior study or travel experience in the United States or elsewhere;
- be mature, responsible, independent, confident, open-minded, tolerant, thoughtful, and inquisitive;
- be willing and able to fully participate in an intensive academic program, community service, and educational travel; and,
- be comfortable with campus life, prepared to share living accommodations, and able to make adjustments to cultural and social practices different from those of their home communities.

To apply for the institute

Applicants should submit an application for this program by e-mail. The application deadline is October 17, 2014. The electronic application form may be downloaded from [HERE](#).

Applications must include the following documents:

1. Application Form which includes a personal statement of not more than 500 words.
2. Scanned copy of biographic page of passport
3. Scanned copy of transcript of completed university years/semesters
4. Two recommendation letters (one must be from university)

To submit an application or to request more program details, all interested candidates are welcome to contact Cultural Affairs Assitant Ms Farizan Zulkifli, Public Affairs, American Embassy, 376, Jalan Tun Razak, 50400 Kuala Lumpur.
Tel: (03) 2168-5102; e-mail: KLPAEXCHANGES@state.gov

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